

2003

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CONTACT REPORT

DATE: 1000, 28 April 1954

PLACE: War Room

PERSONS PRESENT: Mr. Wisner, Mr. Bissell, Mr. Barnes, [ ]  
Messrs. [ ] came in at 1000.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Wisner spoke first, saying that "we have the full green light and the go ahead." This was in regard to policy and he indicated that he was not addressing himself to operational considerations. With regard to flights, approach, etc. - it is all in the affirmative. He mentioned that there may be operational consideration requiring that the program be shifted forward from the present date or other changes and the staff should bear in mind constantly the importance of maintaining a sufficient degree of flexibility in their approach to this thing so that the program can be adjusted to fit the need.

It was strongly recommended that none of this relieved us of the responsibility we owe to our government and ourselves to so conduct this operation that there will be a minimum possible chance of it being pinned on the U.S. officially and conclusively and so as to maximize the possibility that when the blame gets around to being placed, such confusion will exist as to who did it that it can't be sorted out.

Mr. Wisner did not think false trails had been sufficiently developed.

Mr. Barnes stated that he considered himself here largely in the capacity of a Headquarters representative. He brings some of the Headquarters thinking here and will take back there from time to time the thinking here. He stated that [ ] had been chief of operations and will continue to be but that he, Barnes, will help in any way that he can.

[ ] then started a very general briefing covering most of the aspects of PBSUCCESS in general, reserving for various individuals directly concerned the more specific aspects of KUHOOK, KUFIRE and KUGOWN situation.

Mr. Wisner stated that the Director is always going to reserve the final judgment as to when to pull the last switch. He has to be satisfied that we have sufficient elements of strength and status of readiness. He is interested only in the success of the operation. He is not interested policy-wise. There is no operation regarded as being so important as this one and no operation on which the reputation of the Agency is more at stake.

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The boss has to be satisfied that we have what it takes. Mr. Wisner stated that he did not anticipate lengthy delays but there might be operational considerations which LINCOLN would know more about than Washington which would temporarily alter plans. He suggested that when LINCOLN has something really good, Headquarters should be told about it, slug it for the boss' attention.

Mr. Wisner requested documents which are available at LINCOLN showing the internal strength and what the opposition is. He stated that Headquarters had never received a clear and concise statement of what the plans are with respect to what takes place on D-day. He had thought that Headquarters had this but apparently if they do no one can find it. He asked for about 2 pages on this subject.

[ ] said that no detailed tactical plan had been contemplated until it was known what we had. Now we were concerned with the development of assets. [ ] then proceeded with the general briefing, touching briefly on Regional Command, LINCOLN set-up, etc. and stated the fact that Security is here being used operationally.

Mr. Wisner asked for information about SCRANTON - SHERWOOD. The question of being sure about communications between [ ] the Calligaris' Command Post and station was raised and discussed at length. Statement was made that two lines of communications will be available - through the CP(indigenous) and through the station.

PT/16 discussion was reserved for afternoon discussion .

Intelligence breakdown of RUFUS net was discussed. Development chart was displayed (and explanations given re progress marked on same.).

Mr. Wisner questioned what should be told the Charge in Guatemala about reporting on SHERWOOD when it goes on the air.

It is felt that we have the capability of reaching operational readiness during the month of June. Lots of factors have bearing on that and certain operations may not develop as planned but we are aware of that. Though we have a plan laid out, we know there can be changes and are prepared to be flexible.

[ ] asked that the KUHOOK briefing be left till last in order that it could be properly seen in focus.

[ ] was asked to explain the PP operations. He stated that their main asset is SHERWOOD and that 6 days programs are already taped.

Issue was raised about possibility of substituting tapes in order to provide current coverage of any developments of interest. [ ] mentioned that RUFUS had a man with a good radio voice whom they proposed to bring up and train and then send back for use in just such instances. [ ] disapproved this plan because it is planned that no indigenous personnel from the CALLIGERIS group will be used at the site. Mr. Wisner felt that the use of the radio was a very important point and its effectiveness and impact is proportionate to the speed with which it acts. He cited as an example Radio Free Europe. A discussion on this subject between Mr. Wisner, Mr. Bissell and Mr. Barnes and [ ] followed.

Mr. Wisner was informed by [ ] of the possibility of using Marine Air Force for special flights to Panama. Mr. Wisner said he would go to work on this when he and Mr. Bissell returned to Headquarters, and that he wouldn't need a follow-up cable on this.

SHERWOOD is to be on the air two hours a day as of 1 May and this will be lengthened to 4 hours a day. There is a possibility of plugging this station's program in on a government-sponsored program eventually.

[ ] discussed the military paper now being published. The articles in this are being prepared by army officers on RUFUS' staff. Mr. Leddy (ODACID) was concerned with the possibility that, if the tone of this paper were not sufficiently modulated and if the paper should be believed by the people to be published by an underground group within the existing Guatemalan army, it might cause an early purge of the Guatemalan army.

[ ] said that this could not happen because the army paper started in the exiles' paper and the articles are signed by the true names of the people writing them. Texts have so far been restricted. Tempo has been gauged to the time and now articles are moderate.

CRUZ War was brought up and the program against him, with its results, was discussed.

El Rebelde is being published again. The "32" program is in action. Mr. Wisner suggested that Headquarters should propagandize the "32" campaign and ARBENZ' reaction to it and tell what the "32" means. This should be circulated. "ARBENZ is arresting patriots who are in favor of keeping out foreign intervention."

[ ] stated that currently rumors are being circulated. Presently there is a rumor in the rural areas that government leaders have prepared for flight abroad. On the other side, there is a rumor that CASTILLO Armas is on the way.

[ ] stated that RUFUS is encouraged now. Our reasons for delays have been kept from him. The political plan "Cruz y Quetzal" was reviewed with RUFUS during [ ] visit with him. They (RUFUS) favor it but feel it is a bit flowery. They feel that the idea of "Cruz y Quetzal" should be retained but want to include the Plan of Tegucigalpa and the joint result would be "Cruz y Quetzal". They played down the Indian thing and also read out the part about the U. S. having a commercial influence there.

RUFUS had three questions troubling him: 1. What would be the Group's attitude if a group of anti-ARBENZ and anti-Communist officers grab the ball and prematurely take over the government? What would the Group's attitude be in such an event? (Mr. Wisner said we will stay on his side. "He is our hero. "). 2. RUFUS is worried about the approaching elections in Honduras since GALVEZ' position weakens daily. (Mr. Wisner said that SKILLET had briefed them on this and he is worried about the local situation.). 3. RUFUS is worried about his 80 - 100 trained men now in Tegucigalpa over whom he virtually has no control until he gives the battle cry. The town is full of Guatemalan agents. He is worried about getting them out of Tegucigalpa. (Mr. Wisner agreed that he had a problem there.)

Mr. Wisner suggested to Mr. Bissell that with help from [ ] a paper be prepared to show Holland which points out to him the things done and being done which are exclusive of the PM aspect. He (Mr. Holland) has been told about certain things. The paper we have talks about assets and he wants to talk about action. The manner of building up the stories on the police chief is colorful - this shows results.

Mr. Wisner said we have to make this thing stick. ODACID admits they are at fault in not having a program for making this thing sure and making it stick once we have done it. Mr. Wisner spoke of economic assistance, being prepared to recognize the new government, making statements about it once it has been accomplished. We should get credit for what we are doing. Mr. Wisner stated he was not sure ODACID would be kept up-to-date at all; but they needed to be given something to tide this over. It is a privilege for ODACID to be kept informed, not a right.

It was suggested that the Pastoral Letter be included/<sup>be</sup>included in the paper for ODACID.

[ ] was asked to give 5 minutes information on EEs gathered.

Mn [ ] was asked to give a short briefing on [ ] mission. He stated we gather intelligence from SEMANTIC and SECANT who are now back in Guatemala.

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Mr. Wisner questioned if we were getting anything from the military missions in the target country. If we wait till the last minute to ask that they be withdrawn, they won't do it. He requested that LINCOLN advise what was desired to do about the mission. Is it desirable that steps be taken now to prepare for its withdrawal?(about 15 May). The withdrawal should be so designed that it can be played up for propaganda purposes. **it.** Mr. Peurifoy said that the Air Mission has not been doing what was requested of/:

[ ] stated that we are over 18 days behind on black flights. We feel that we should have an extra aircraft added in order to make up this deficit. AMD, last week, assured him they were able to provide this aircraft within a maximum of 7 - 8 days. This would be plane and crew. Crew would have to use the same cover story as the others have. Mr. Wisner was concerned with the security angle with regard to extra crew rather than the plane. He said he would take this matter up on his return to Headquarters. He would favor an extra plane rather than the crew. It was requested that at least the plane be procured since we are pressing luck in using only 2 aircraft.

There followed a general discussion of the labor situation. The Labor Board wants to know everything. There is friction between the unions. This would be a cold approach to the head of the Steel Workers Union. [ ] brought up the fact that we have spotted and cleared an Aprista down there. He will work operationally through [ ]. The man who was chosen was chosen because he knows the field and has the necessary qualifications. Originally this approach was to be most informal - not to be a firm proposition.

Mr. Wisner requested information on the deception program with the New Orleans angle. [ ] had prepared a follow-up on this and would brief him after lunch.

Mr. Wisner said he thought everyone would agree that it was very important for [ ] to have the talk with [ ], find out what is motivating him (is he abandoning the ship or is it that he feels he has done all that he can usefully do?). [ ] was requested to assess his reasons. Find out what it is that has caused him to take this move. If he is getting out because he has lost confidence, find out why. If his answer is negative, don't accept it as a final answer; keep the issue open. Tell [ ] that you [ ] will have to come back and talk to the Group. He has had his feelings hurt. [ ] was instructed not to let [ ] break the conversation finally. Mr. Bissell suggested that [ ] attempt to get [ ] to postpone the date he had given for severance. [ ] said [ ] had put on paper several incidents which happened after his trip to Mexico - but chiefly the fact of his poor health prompted this move.

Meeting adjourned at 1230, with Mr. Robertson scheduled to give a briefing at 1400.

pm  
28 April 1954